

# STATE OF COLORADO

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**OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR JANE E. NORTON**

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## The Lieutenant Governor's Committee to Promote Adoption

Bill Owens  
Governor

Thank you for taking the time to become informed about the Lieutenant Governor's Committee to Promote Adoption that launched on January 9, 2004. I am pleased to provide you with a brief background and history of the activities my office has been pursuing since November of 2002, when Governor Owens asked me to focus on promoting adoption as part of our strengthening families initiative. Many adoption advocates responded after hearing the Governor's charge. The most significant work provided was by Mr. Terry Bagby, an adoptive parent who assembled an unofficial working group of adoption experts to collectively brainstorm ideas on how to improve the permanent placement of waiting children, and the adoption system within the state. Mr. Bagby has agreed to co-chair our committee.

In April of 2003, task force members met with me to present their recommendations. It was decided that the task force would continue meeting with Sandy Blaylock, as my lead on the initiative, to determine the appropriate next steps. The result of their work was my approval of the plan to launch the *Lieutenant Governor's Committee to Promote Adoption*, based upon best practices in other states, in January of 2004, which will meet monthly for six months to work on the following:

**Committee Goal:** Achieve a successful, life-long permanency placement for every "waiting" child in the State of Colorado.

**Committee Theme:** Strengthening Colorado Families – One Child at a Time

**Committee Charges:**

- 1) Review pertinent laws, regulations, judicial procedures, and other support systems that impact the state's adoption system.
  - a. Determine which of these impede the goal of timely adoptions; and
  - b. Issue specific recommendations as to how Colorado can create an adoption-friendly system free of biases, laws, and policies that needlessly complicate or delay the adoption process.
- 2) Provide prospective adoptive families with statewide, centralized assistance regarding the adoption process, both pre and post-adoption.
- 3) Develop a public relations and educational campaign to increase awareness of a child's need for permanency, to recruit permanency families, to dispel adoption 'untruths', and to promote adoption.

**Committee Members:** We have assembled an amazing group of highly diverse professionals including adoption organizations, the state department of human services, county departments of social services directors, a mental health professional, adoptive parents and an adoptee, faith-based organizations, adoption associations, judicial and legal experts, the Governor's director of policy and initiatives, and staff from the Lieutenant Governor's office.

**Committee Timeline:** The first committee meeting has been scheduled on January 9, 2004 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the State Capitol, Room 356, with final recommendations due July 15, 2004.

**Other Activities the Office of Lieutenant Governor has been working on to promote adoption within the State of Colorado:**

- Serving as a beacon for Colorado's abused and neglected children by promoting stable, permanent and safe homes.
- Building and updating the Lieutenant Governor's website to provide much needed information and links to other resources for adopting parents and families.
- Working with Governor's policy staff to identify potential adoption legislation – coordinate efforts to eliminate barriers that prevent children from being placed in loving, stable homes.
- Working with the counties to promote adoption and coordinate ongoing wraparound resources.
- Identifying community leaders and public figures to partner in the adoption effort.
- Considering the establishment of a mentoring program where adoptive parents provide support to other parents pending adoption status—possibly a faith-based collaboration.
- Working on a recognition program to honor adoptive and foster parents annually.

Again, thank you for your interest in what this Administration is doing with regards to promoting adoption as part of our strengthening families initiative. I am pleased with the progress that has been made and know that positive outcomes will result from the work of this committee for our Colorado kids.

Best regards,

  
Jane E. Norton  
Lieutenant Governor